2: Ray E-5 (1928-1930) 1932 Southeast Salish
Sanpoil

PREFACE

The Sanpoil and Nespelem, like other Indians of the north central Plateau, never became parties to any treaty with the United States. They were virtually ignored by the government and have been accorded little attention by others. They remained in their old habitats and lived their old life, despite encroachments by whites, until 1872. At that time a reservation was set aside for them and they were gradually concentrated upon it. The original bounds of the reservation were the Columbia river on the south and the east, the international boundary on the north and the Okanogan river on the west. Subsequently the northern half of this area was subtracted. The remaining natives still occupy the southern half.

The present study was begun in the summer of 1928; the expenses of that trip were defrayed by myself. Several subsequent visits were made, the last during the summer of 1930. All of these were under the auspices of the Department of Anthropology of the University of Washington.

A number of myths and folk tales were obtained in conjunction with the ethnographic material. They are being published independently in the Journal of American Folk-Lore. Material also was gathered relating to a native messianic movement called the Kolaskin Cult. This data likewise has not been included here but is being prepared as a separate paper which will probably appear as a journal article.

In late 1930 there appeared *The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateau*, in which Franz Boas compiled and edited the material gathered by James A. Teit many years earlier (1904, 1908, 1909). Teit treats the Sanpoil rather more summarily than most of the other groups he visited, yet he has a considerable amount of data of specifically Sanpoil origin. His work was not available in time for me to use it in the field. I have made but few item references to Teit's treatment for complete cross-referencing would have necessitated an objectionable number of footnotes. Moreover, in seeking information regarding these peoples both sources should always be consulted. Our information is at variance in several instances.

I wish here to express my gratitude to Dr. Erna Gunther for her help and kindness. I am also greatly indebted to Dr. Melville Jacobs for initial encouragement and continued stimulation. My further thanks are extended to Dr. Leslie Spier, to my wife and to many friends for assistance and suggestions. Mr. George Neville Jones and Martha Reekie Plahaut exerted painstaking efforts in identifying botanical specimens. Mr. Albert L. Seeman kindly placed at my disposal original meteorologic data.

The phonetic system here used is that recommended in the report of a committee of the American Anthropological Association entitled *Phonetic Transcription of American Indian Languages* (Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Vol. 66, No. 6, 1916), with the single exception that the Greek symbol gamma (γ) is

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TERRITORY

GEOGRAPHY

The Sanpoil lived in a region consisting mainly of treeless deserts and subject to great ranges in temperature (Plate 4). In the extreme northern and eastern portions of their territory the hills were clad with evergreens but these areas were used only for hunting. All permanent settlements were on the Columbia river since there the climate was milder, driftwood was available for fuel, water was always at hand in any quantity and travel was made easy by canoe.

All of eastern Washington and portions of adjoining states and British Columbia are drained by the Columbia and its tributaries. This great river has cut a huge gorge hundreds of feet deep through the lava plateau over which it flows. Where it is not confined within a canyon the banks are in the form of gravel terraces or benches, one above the other, which extend for considerable distances. It was on the lowermost series of these benches that most of the native villages were located. The plateau is a bed of basalt, 4000 feet deep in some places, formed by a succession of lava flows. This originally level plain has been considerably broken up by gorges cut by ancient streams and by the Columbia river at times when it was temporarily blocked from its main channel. These dry canyons are known as coulees. The greatest of these, the Grand Coulee, was cut by the river when the Okanogan glacier filled the upper Columbia valley at the "Big Bend." Minor uplifts have further modified the topography since the lava was laid down.

Sanpoil territory on the north extended into the physiographic province known as the Okanogan highlands. This is a northwestern projection of the Rocky mountains with elevations of 5000 and 6000 feet. The gently rounded hills are composed chiefly of granite and are fairly well wooded.[3]

The mean monthly temperature varies from 20 degrees F. in December to 66 degrees F. in July in the northern part of the territory (Republic). In the region south of the river the variation is from 24 to 74 degrees F., the extremes being reached in the same months (Wilbur).[4] Maximum summer temperatures of 115 degrees F. and minimum winter temperatures of minus 25 degrees F. have been recorded. Slightly less extreme figures are quite common.

The average annual precipitation over the whole of the former habitat is about 13 inches. Most of this falls in the winter months in the form of snow except in the extreme north (Republic) where the monthly distribution is very irregular and spread throughout the year.[4] Snow remains on the ground throughout the winter months.

Humidity is low; the annual mean percentage is probably not over 65.

Storm centers are normally north of the area, causing prevailing winds to blow up the Columbia river. In the late winter and early spring these warm, dry winds are called chinooks. They cause a rapid melting of snows.

Two plant life zones, the Upper Sonoran and the Arid Transition, are represented in this area. The former is typical of the Columbia plains or lava plateau

[3] Saunders, *The Physical Geography of Washington*, pages 311-12, 314.
[4] Information furnished by Mr. Albert L. Seeman of the Department of Geography, University of Washington.